**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-24 (canceled).

25(currently amended).    A method of compressing a digital image having a plurality of pixels, each <u>of said plurality of pixels</u> represented by a sequence <u>including at least three</u> ~~of~~ ordered symbols, said method comprising:

(a)    organizing a plurality of said symbols into a <u>first</u> bit plane, each said symbol in said <u>first</u> bit plane occupying the same position in a respective sequence of ordered symbols for a pixel; ~~and~~

(b)    <u>organizing a plurality of said symbols into a second bit plane, each said symbol in said second bit plane occupying the same position in a respective sequence of ordered symbols for a pixel;</u>

(c)    <u>organizing a plurality of said symbols into a third bit plane, each said symbol in said third bit plane occupying the same position in a respective sequence of ordered symbols for a pixel;</u>

(d~~b~~)    compressing said image by compressing said <u>first bit plane</u> ~~bit plane.~~<u>;</u>

(e)    <u>compressing said image by compressing said second and third bit planes together as a group, wherein said first bit plane is compressed separate from the combination of said second and third bit planes.</u>

26(previously presented).    The method of claim 25 where said bit plane is compressed using a lossless compression algorithm.

27(previously presented).    The method of claim 26 where said algorithm is a Huffman encoding scheme.

28(previously presented).   The method of claim 26 where said algorithm is a run length encoding scheme.

29(previously presented).   The method of claim 25 where compression of said bit plane reduces the number of symbols in said bit plane.